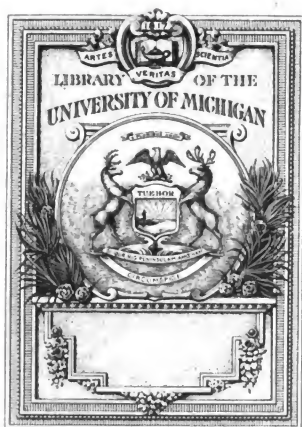




# *The battle of Bound Brook*

T. E. Davis



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THE BATTLE

OF

BOUND BROOK





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MAJOR GENERAL  
BENJAMIN LINCOLN,

*B. Lincoln*

Commander of the American Forces at Bound Brook,  
April 13th, 1777.

FROM THE PAINTING IN THE COLLECTION OF THE  
MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL SOCIETY.

# The Battle of Bound Brook.

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AN ADDRESS

DELIVERED BEFORE THE

WASHINGTON CAMP GROUND ASSOCIATION

BY REV. T. E. DAVIS,

AT THE RESIDENCE OF THE HON. C. HOWARD PERRY,

ON

WASHINGTON'S BIRTHDAY, FEBRUARY 22, 1894.

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1895.

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## NOTE.

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Since the address on "THE BATTLE OF BOUND BROOK" was given, I have added to it many interesting facts relating to the history of Bound Brook during the Revolution, which are now printed in this book.

Many of these historical facts are not new to the members of the Washington Camp Ground Association, but they are thus put in a convenient form for reference and preservation.

That this little volume may develop a truer spirit of patriotism, and a deeper love for the historic associations of Bound Brook is the sincere wish of

THE HISTORIAN OF THE WASHINGTON CAMP GROUND ASSOCIATION.  
Bound Brook, January 17, 1895.



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## The Battle of Bound Brook.

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*Mr. President, members of the Washington Camp  
Ground Association, and invited guests:*

THE YEAR OF Independence, 1776, was closing with dark prospects for the young American Republic. The British Army was marching on to Philadelphia with the intention of capturing and holding the capital of the nation. Congress had resolved to go to Baltimore for safety. Washington with his Army was retreating before the British. The American Army was too small and poorly equipped to meet the enemy in battle. The time of enlistment of many of the soldiers had expired, and no promises could keep them in the service. Many of the soldiers were without tents, shoeless, ragged, dirty and hungry.

Lord Howe, the British Commander, had issued a proclamation to all who were in arms against Great Britain, and to all civil officers, offering a full pardon to those who within sixty days would pledge their loyalty to the King. Many thousands of the people of New Jersey, believing that the cause of Liberty was lost, responded to this proclamation and came to New Brunswick to take the oath of allegiance. Among these were many prominent men of the State, who had held high civil and military offices.

Thus gloomy and discouraging was the condition when New Jersey became the battle field of the Revolu-

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lution. But there soon came a turn in the tide of affairs. New recruits in large numbers joined the American Army. The battles of Trenton, December 26; Princeton, January 3; and Weston, January 20, in each of which the Americans were victorious, gave new hope and vigor to the patriots.

Cornwallis learning that Washington had secured all the boats on the Delaware river, so as to prevent the crossing of the British Army in its march to Philadelphia, decided to encamp for the winter in New Brunswick. Washington took the main part of his army, after the battle of Princeton, to their winter quarters in Morristown.

Somerset County suffered severely during this winter from the depredations of the British foraging parties. All along the Raritan river, with its tributaries, the Millstone and South Branch, were prosperous farmers whose well-filled barns and cellars tempted the British soldiers. To shield the people along the Raritan Valley from these marauders, Washington ordered Gen. Benjamin Lincoln with a force of 500 American soldiers to guard the Raritan river. Lincoln was stationed at Bound Brook, his headquarters being in the house of Peter Williamson, situated in the eastern part of the village.

This house is still standing and is known as the Battery House. It is near the lower Main street railroad crossing about a hundred feet north of the Central Railroad track. Mr. Frederic N. Voorhees has kindly given a photograph of this ancient dwelling which was erected in 1744.

A short distance south of this house Lincoln built a block house, in which cannon were placed in a position to defend any approach of the enemy by the road leading from New Brunswick or the bridge across the Raritan river. There were earthworks surrounding this block house. All traces of these military fortifications disappeared with the building of the railroad.

#### SKETCH OF GEN. LINCOLN.

Gen. Benjamin Lincoln, commanding the forces at

Bound Brook in the early spring of 1777, was born in Hingham, Mass., January 24, 1733. He received only a common school education and was a farmer until 1773. He was then elected a member of the Provincial Congress of Massachusetts, of which he was Secretary and a member of the Committee of Correspondence.

He was active in organizing the Continental troops and was appointed Major General of the State Militia in 1776. After the Americans were defeated on Long Island, Lincoln was sent by the Council of Massachusetts to reinforce Washington with a body of militia. On the 19th of February, 1777, he received the appointment by Congress of Major General in the American Army, by the recommendation of Washington.

At the Battle of Bemis Heights, near Stillwater, N. Y., he was severely wounded and was forced to retire from the army for a year. In August, 1778, he rejoined the army and on September 25 was appointed by Congress to the chief command of the American forces in the South. On the 11th of May, 1780, he was obliged to surrender the city of Charleston, S. C., to the stronger force of Gen. Henry Clinton.

Gen. Lincoln was allowed to go back to Massachusetts on parole and in November, 1780, he was exchanged for Maj. Gen. Phillips, who had been taken prisoner at Saratoga. He took a prominent part in the campaign of 1781, and at the surrender of Yorktown he was appointed by Washington to receive the sword of Cornwallis. He was chosen Secretary of War by Congress, holding this position for only two years, retiring to his farm in 1783. The next year he was called to important duties in connection with the Indian troubles and local rebellion in his own state. He was elected Lieutenant-Governor of Massachusetts, and appointed by President Washington Collector of the Port of Boston. He died at his native place May 9, 1810, aged 77 years, in the same house in which he was born.

In the beautiful cemetery overlooking the town of

Hingham is a plain but massive white marble monument on which is cut on one side :

Benjamin Lincoln,  
Major General in the Army of the Revolution,  
Born January 24, 1733,  
Died May 9, 1810.

On the other side is the inscription :

Erected by his descendants,  
1852.

Gen. Lincoln was universally respected and loved as a patriot, hero and a good man. He was of middle height, broad shoulders and muscular build, with intelligent, pleasant features. In manners he was easy and unaffected, but always courteous and polite. He was always correct and pure in his conversation and was never heard to use a profane or unchaste word, nor would he allow it in his presence. He maintained the strictest duty of his religion during all the hardships of war. He was one of the founders of the Congregational Church in his own town and for many years a deacon. No officer in the American Army was more loved or trusted by Washington than Gen. Benjamin Lincoln.

#### STATIONED AT BOUND BROOK.

It was about March 1st, 1777, that Lincoln with his small army was stationed at Bound Brook. This was an important military position. for two reasons.

By way of Bound Brook the British would march to attack Washington at Morristown. The little force at Bound Brook could stop for a time the march of the enemy, and send the American commander a word of warning. A second reason for this encampment at Bound Brook, was, to prevent the enemy from getting their supplies by way of the Raritan river.

Gen. Lincoln had a line of patrol, extending along the north bank of the Raritan river, from Van Veghten's bridge down to the bend in the river, from which a view of the Raritan Landing bridge could be obtained. The whole line of patrol was five or six miles, and guarded the three bridges across the river,

by which the British would be likely to cross, in marching to an attack on Washington's army.

The British Army at New Brunswick consisted of 17,000 men, English and Hessians, the best equipped and disciplined of all His Majesty's forces in America. These troops were under the command of Lords Howe and Cornwallis, both of whom had their headquarters in the city.

Fortifications were thrown up on the high bank above the river, west of the city, near the present location of the Theological Seminary. An important outpost on an eminence at Raritan Landing was also erected, from which the upper valley of the Raritan could be seen for a long distance.

#### THE ATTACK.

The British commander knowing the importance of Bound Brook as a military station, and the small American force defending it, planned for its attack and capture.

On Saturday night, April 12th, 1777, between 8 and 9 o'clock, a British force of about 4,000 soldiers started from New Brunswick for Bound Brook.

Gen. Lord Cornwallis was in command, with Generals Grant and Matthews and Col. Donop. The troops consisted of one battalion of grenadiers, one battalion of light infantry, a detachment of the guards, the light horse, two battalions of Hessians and the Yagers.

The expedition was planned and carried out with so much secrecy, that the rest of the army and the people of the city did not know of it until Sunday morning.

Cornwallis divided his army into three detachments. One was to cross the bridge at Raritan Landing, and march to Bound Brook on the north side of the river. The other two detachments were to remain on the south side, and march to the attack on the enemy by way of Van Veghten's bridge, and South Bound Brook. In marching they were to carefully avoid all roads, and move as quietly as possible, so as to be

unobserved and thus prevent a warning being given to the American guards.

The plan of Cornwallis evidently was to surround the Americans with two detachments of his army, thus preventing their escape to the mountains, and with the third detachment on the south side of the river, to capture or destroy those who might attempt to cross.

The expedition was entirely successful, as far as the plan of march was concerned. Each detachment reached its destination without detection, and the soldiers rested on their arms until morning.

According to orders, the British waited until the American sentries cry, "All's well," was heard and the morning gun had been fired, and then the two detachments simultaneously rushed upon them.

The guards were quickly overpowered. Gen. Lincoln and his soldiers were startled by the fierce cry of his sentries, "To arms!" Hastily arising, without time for dressing, they made a rapid retreat, passing through the fast enclosing lines of the two detachments of the enemy's army, firing a few shots aimlessly as they ran.

Had the sentries' alarm come only a few minutes later, or had Cornwallis' plan for surrounding the Americans been more speedily effected, the entire body of the Americans would surely have been captured by this superior force. It was in fact a very narrow escape from total destruction or capture. After reaching the higher ground, the Americans made a stand and began a brisk firing, but the British line reforming and returning the fire, they were compelled to fall back to the mountains in the rear of Bound Brook for safety.

#### HISTORIANS DIFFER ON DETAILS.

The various accounts of this engagement are so conflicting, that I give the leading reports from the officers and press of both parties, and leave the conclusions to the individual reader.

Gen. Lincoln's report, as given in the book "Wash-

ington and his Generals," by J. T. Headley, is as follows:

While lying at Bound Brook on the Raritan, with only 500 men fit for service, he was surprised by Cornwallis and Grant at the head of a large force.

At daybreak on the spring morning of April 13th, as he was quietly reposing in his camp, he was startled by the cry "to arms," the fierce roll of the drum and report of cannon.

Looking from the house in which he was quartered, he saw the enemy within 200 yards. Through the carelessness of his patrols, they had been allowed almost to enter his camp without the alarm being given. Springing to his horse, he, with one of his aids rallied his troops, and led them between the two rapidly closing columns of British, and escaped to the mountains with the loss of sixty men killed and wounded.

One of his aids, all his baggage, papers and artillery fell into the hands of the enemy.

A similar report is given by one of Lincoln's officers, in a letter dated Bound Brook, April 14, 1777. He says:

Yesterday morning about five o'clock, the enemy having found means to evade the observation of our patrols, attacked our small encampment in several parts, which obliged us to retire to the mountains in our rear.

We left three pieces with a few men. I lost most of my baggage and papers. We had 500 men who were extended the distance of five or six miles. The enemy's forces were about 4,000, with four or five general officers.

The enemy remained in the village only a few hours, and after destroying a few stores returned to their quarters at Brunswick, and we to our own. We are within three or four miles of the enemy, and a good road between us.

I hope we shall soon have such reinforcements as

will enable us to look them in the face. What could be expected from 400 or 500 men, in the scattered state our men were necessarily in, against the force brought to attack us, supported, as I am informed, by eighteen or twenty cannon ?

Gen. Lord Howe made this report to the British Government :

Lord Cornwallis, ever watchful to take advantage of the enemy's situation, surprised and defeated on the 13th instant, at break of day, a corps of rebels at Bound Brook, killed 30 and took between 80 and 90 prisoners including officers, with three brass field pieces.

The general officer commanding there very narrowly escaped being one of the number.

The loss on our side was only three Yagers and four soldiers of the light infantry slightly wounded.

One of the British officers in a letter from New Brunswick, April 20, 1777, says :

A detachment from the garrison here, of which our battalion of grenadiers is in part composed, surprised the rebels at Bawnbrook on the morning of the 13th, being Sunday, when three brass field pieces were taken, a quantity of spirits, flour and other stores destroyed, several rebels killed and made prisoners, among the latter were three officers, the rest by mere dint of running made their escape to the mountains which lie above the town.

The general officer who commanded found means to get off in a critical point of time. His papers fell into our hands.

There was but little firing, what was, fell to the light infantry and chasseurs, two of the former and one of the latter were wounded, being all our loss.

The *Boston Gazette*, in its issue of April 28, 1777, gives the following account :

By the Morristown post we are informed that early



last Sabbath morning a large body of the enemy attacked about 400 of our troops at Bound Brook, and that after a smart engagement they got possession of the village. The Americans who were taken prisoners were taken to New York.

The *Massachusetts Spy* of April 24, the *State Journal of New Hampshire*, and the *Connecticut Courant* of the same week, all give substantially the same report. The *Boston Gazette* of the same date as mentioned above says further :

The enemy at New York continues to treat the American prisoners with great barbarity. Their allowance to each man for three days, is one pound of beef, three worm-eaten musty biscuits and a quart of salt water.

The meat they are obliged to eat raw, as they have not the smallest allowance of fuel. Owing to this more than savage cruelty the prisoners die fast, and in the small space of three weeks no less than 1,700 brave men have perished.

The New York papers which were loyal to the British Crown give the most details of the engagement. The *Royal American Gazette*, of April 14, 1777, after giving an account of the regiments and officers engaged, and the night march to Bound Brook, says :

The order being given for the attack, the troops rushed on with their usual intrepidity, and put the rebels to flight, killed upwards of 100, took 73 prisoners amongst which were one of Lincoln's aid-de-camps, one captain, one lieutenant, and a man in irons sentenced by the rebels to be shot on Sunday, 3 brass cannon, a quantity of arms, two wagons loaded with ammunition, a number of horses, 120 head of cattle, sheep, hogs, etc., besides destroying 300 barrels of flour, several hogsheads of New England rum, with sundry other articles that the flourishing states could not very well spare. \* \* \* Our loss was one

killed and two Yagers wounded. Many of the friends of the government availed themselves of the confusion the rebels were thrown in by the above disaster, and came into Brunswick with the troops; several of the rebels embraced the same opportunity, and brought in their arms.

It is said the rebel general had not time to collect his clothes, his safety requiring his utmost dexterity and swiftness. The prisoners were brought to New York to-day, and are lodged in gaol with their wretched brethren.

The *New York Mercury* of April 21, 1777, gives the following account of the results of the encounter:

Above one hundred of the rebels were killed, eighty-five taken prisoners, among whom was a fellow who passed for Lincoln's aide-de-camp, and two others under the style of officers.

The rebels taken have been brought to town, and are the most miserable looking creatures that ever bore the name of soldiers, being covered with nothing but rags and vermin. Three brass field pieces, muskets, ammunition, camp equipage, papers, several horses, near two hundred head of cattle, with sheep, hogs, rum, flour, bread, etc., were chiefly brought away, and the rest, such as the rum and salted provisions, being very bad, were destroyed.

From these conflicting reports it is difficult to determine the real loss of the Americans.

The British General did not attempt to follow the Americans in their retreat, but with his army, spent the morning of that Sabbath day in gathering stores and provisions, and plundering the homes of the people of Bound Brook, many of which had no inmates, they having fled with the soldiers and hiding in the mountains. They also destroyed or carried away much valuable property on the return march to New Brunswick. (See appendix A.)

Lord Cornwallis took his first breakfast in Bound

Brook that day, it is said at the house of Philip Van Horne,\* although another report says his stopping place while in the village, was at the "Jew House."†

General Greene, who was stationed with his army at Basking Ridge, hastened to the support of Lincoln, but it was past midday when he reached Bound Brook, and the British had already left the place, and marched back to New Brunswick.

A detachment was at once sent forward with all haste, to attack the rear of their Army.

They were overtaken near Raritan Landing, one officer and seven privates were killed and sixteen were made prisoners. Upon the return of the American soldiers to their camp at Bound Brook, they looked with dismay upon the devastation perpetrated by the enemy. Immediate steps were taken to restore order and repair damages.

Supplies were sent from other divisions of the Army. Gen. Alexander, also known as Lord Stirling, wrote to Gen. Lincoln from Basking Ridge: "It has just occurred to me that a little refreshment for your men will be no disagreeable acquisition to you. I have therefore ordered 600 pounds of beef, three barrels of flour, and twenty gallons of rum to be sent you instantly."

The surprise at Bound Brook caused much anxiety to Washington. It showed that it was a post of great importance and also of great danger.

It was the intention of the Commander-in-chief to construct strong fortifications at Bound Brook, and to

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\*The Van Horne house on the west bank of the Middlebrook and near the road leading to Somerville is still well preserved. It is the property of the Bound Brook Water Company and occupied by Martin Toman. Gen. Greene in a letter to his wife from Bound Brook, says, that he dined in the same house where Lord Cornwallis took breakfast.

†The Jew House was then owned and occupied by a wealthy widow, the daughter of John R. Myers, who afterward married one of the officers of Cornwallis' staff. This house standing on the line of the Central Railroad of New Jersey, east of the station, was destroyed many years ago.

station a large part of the American Army there. But General Greene having made a careful survey of the field, and noting its exposure on all sides to attacks from the enemy, which might be attended with more disastrous results than the first defeat, it was deemed unwise to carry such plans into effect.

On the 28th of May in the same year Washington came to his encampment on the Middlebrook and the troops were withdrawn from Bound Brook.

#### AMERICAN CAMP ON THE MIDDLEBROOK.

Bound Brook again occupied an important place in the War of the Revolution when Washington, with the main body of the American forces, encamped on the elevation of ground overlooking the village of Bound Brook, and only a mile distant. Here an excellent view of the valley of the Raritan could be obtained, and from the true "Washington Rock"\* on the summit of the hill, all the movements of the enemy at New Brunswick could be seen.

The American Army came from Morristown May 28, 1777, and pitched their tents on the Middlebrook. The entire Army numbered 8,398, including cavalry, artillery and infantry. Of these, 2,660 were sick or disabled, so the real strength of the Army was only 5,738 men.

The first encampment was on the west branch of the Middlebrook, in what is called Washington Valley, between the first and second range of mountains. Three forts guarded this valley from any rear attack by the enemy. One of these forts, still carefully preserved, may be seen on the farm and near the home of Mr. Kennedy Bolmer.

Washington remained with his Army in this valley only seventeen days, moving on June 14th to the south side of the mountain, where he took up a very

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\*There is also a "Washington Rock" on the same range of hills between Dunellen and Plainfield. From this rock the American Commander watched the sharp battle between Lord Stirling's American troops, and the British under Cornwallis near New Market, on the 26th day of June, 1777.

strong position on the elevated ground in full view of the British. It was his intention to make a strong line of fortifications here, but on June 30 Lord Howe with the British Army retreated from New Jersey to Staten Island, and two days after, on July 2, Washington moved his Army to Pompton Plains. During this entire encampment, as we learn from a letter written to his brother John, the American Commander occupied a tent in the midst of his Army. This first encampment therefore lasted thirty-five days, from May 28 to July 2, 1777.

#### SECOND CAMP ON THE MIDDLEBROOK.

This was in the winter of 1778-1779, the winter following the terrible experiences of the Army at Valley Forge. The day and the month may be fixed at November 30, according to a letter of Washington November 27, in which he says, "the whole Army is now in motion to the place of winter quarters. If no unexpected interruption happens the whole will be over the 30th instant." Washington did not come to this camp until December 11. The entire force of the Americans was 8,000 or 10,000. The location of their camp was on the high ground on the south side of the mountain, near the old camp of June, 1777. The flag pole now standing on the Washington Camp Ground, from which floats the American Flag every national holiday, is supposed to mark the site of the officers' huts, and was in the center of this second encampment. The soldiers built huts for their winter quarters of logs covered with a plastering of clay. The roof was built of logs covered with hewn slabs. The chimneys were made of stone, or of branches of trees with a coating of clay plaster on both sides to protect them from fire. Washington's headquarters during this encampment was at the Wallis House,\* Somerville.

\*This house is still standing near where the Raritan and Somerville road crosses the New Jersey Central Railroad track. It was built by William Wallis in 1778, and was not entirely finished when Washington occupied it. This is the original spelling of the name. It is now known as Wallace.

Lord Stirling (Gen. Wm. Alexander), Col. Stephen Moylan and Major Harry Lee had their headquarters at Van Horne's. (See note page 13.)

Gen. Steuben was at South Bound Brook, at the home of Abram Staats,† a noted American patriot.

Other American officers were dwelling in the homes of Bound Brook and vicinity, whom we cannot definitely locate.

The American Army remained in camp here until June 3, 1779, when they marched to Highlands, N. Y., by way of Morristown.

This second encampment near Bound Brook was six months and five days in length, from November 30, 1778 to June 3, 1779.

During this period the American soldiers plundered and robbed many of the houses and farms in and around Bound Brook, and notwithstanding the strenuous efforts of Washington and his officers and the severe punishments inflicted, these depredations continued until the Army removed. (See Appendix C.)

#### OTHER STIRRING EVENTS.

The foregoing were not the only times that Bound Brook was the scene of important events during the War of the Revolution. The month of December, 1776, was a period of great loss and suffering to the loyal Americans in Bound Brook and vicinity. No less than five raids were made by different bodies of British soldiers during this month, in each of which after plundering and destroying valuable goods, they carried away large quantities of movable property. (See Appendix B.)

While the British Army was stationed at New Brunswick a company of cavalry made a raid through Bound Brook with the following sad results. They

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†This house, one of the most noted of all the historical relics of Bound Brook, is still standing near the village of South Bound Brook. It contains many curious and valuable articles of Revolutionary and early colonial days, even relics that came over in the Mayflower. It is owned by Mr. C. W. LaTourette, whose family with Mr. Amos McDonald and wife now occupy it.

were accompanied by a number of Tories with the noted Bill Stewart of Somerset county as their guide. Benjamin Bonney was the village blacksmith, living where now stands the house of James Brady, near the Middlebrook crossing, on Main street. Hearing the soldiers coming, he took his four-year-old boy Peres and went down into the outside cellar-way for safety, sitting on the steps, with the boy on his lap. Stewart saw him through a window and fired upon him. The bullet struck the father, from which he died the third day after. The boy Peres escaped and became a prominent man in the church of Bound Brook and in the county.

This same body of troopers broke into the house of Jacob De Groot, robbed his cellar, and finding him on a sick bed attempted to kill him with their swords, but were prevented by the heroic efforts of his wife. When they left Bound Brook they were met a short distance below the village by Col. John Staats, with a body of minute men, who attacked them so fiercely that they lost all their plunder and prisoners and barely escaped with their lives.

#### SULLIVAN'S INDIAN CAMPAIGN.

Bound Brook was again the scene of military excitement, though of a far less dangerous character, when in May, 1779, it was visited by Gen. Maxwell's brigade of New Jersey soldiers. While encamped in the rear of Bound Brook, Washington completed his plans for a campaign against the Indians in Pennsylvania, who had been committing many atrocities on the people of that state. This expedition was given in the charge of Maj. Gen. Sullivan, who had under him four brigades, some independent companies and a body of artillery. The troops moved about the middle of May.

The New Jersey brigade had been encamped through the winter at Elizabethtown. They now received orders to join Sullivan's Army in this Indian expedition.

The regiments in this brigade were the First, Second

and Third of New Jersey under Colonels Ogden, Shrieve and Dayton, with Colonel Spencer's regiment, sixty-eight men from Colonel Baldwin's regiment and seventy five men from Colonel Sheldon's light dragoons, a total brigade force of fourteen hundred and five officers and privates. Their line of march was from Elizabethtown to Easton. At Bound Brook the Army encamped for several days, from May 18th to May 23d, awaiting until they had received the amount of supplies necessary for the Pennsylvania Indian campaign.

#### SIMCOE'S RAID.

One of the most dashing and brilliant exploits in the history of Bound Brook during the war was the raid of the Queen's Rangers, led by Lieut. Col. John Graves Simcoe, on the twenty-sixth of October, 1779. The Queen's Rangers were composed almost entirely of native Americans who were loyal to Great Britain. They were noted for their bravery and military skill; and the record of their deeds during the three years of Simcoe's command won for them the highest praise from military and civil officers.

Simcoe was a brilliant student at Eton and Oxford, from which he graduated with high honors. When the war began his ambition led him to seek fame on the battle field. He was a brave soldier and rose rapidly to a high rank—that of Lieutenant-General. Although having a bitter hatred to everything American, yet he was an honest and just soldier in his treatment of a captured or wounded foe.

The Queen's Rangers, at the time of the Bound Brook raid, numbered between 300 and 400, composed of both infantry and cavalry, of whom eighty picked men, mounted on fine horses, were selected for this raid. Lieut. Col. Simcoe has given a full account of this daring expedition in his Military Journal.

The start was made from Staten Island October 25, at eight o'clock, marching to Billop's Point, where they crossed to Perth Amboy by boat. It was day-break on the morning of the 26th before this band of



cavalry left Perth Amboy. Simcoe had a two-fold object in view—the capture of Governor Livingston, who he thought was at Bound Brook, and the destruction of fifty large flat boats at Van Veghten's bridge, which had been built on the Delaware river and carried overland to the Raritan, that Washington might use them in his attack on the City of New York, which he was now planning.

Bound Brook was reached after a rapid march, where the Rangers halted for rest and plunder. They raided the public house of Peter Staats, known as the "Washington Hotel," standing on the present site of "The Berkeley." Their next halt was at the "Frelinghuysen House," whose landlord, Peter Harpending, was a staunch patriot. This house, still standing on Main street, is owned by B. B. Matthews, M. D., and joins his drug store. A third stop was at the "Middlebrook Hotel," then a favorite resort of the soldiers.

From here, probably, a detachment was sent to burn the old huts on Washington's Camp Ground, in the rear of Bound Brook, on the side of the mountain. Simcoe says he found it impracticable to burn these huts, they not being joined in ranges, nor built of combustible material.

According to an account published in Rivington's *New York Gazette* that same year, by an officer who accompanied the expedition, the huts and buildings were not destroyed, because they had been sold to some of the inhabitants and were therefore private property.

While on this trip to the camp they stole a fine five-year-old horse of Thomas McElrath, who was living south of the camp ground in a house on the site of the present residence of the heirs of Stephen Brown. Thomas McElrath was a soldier in the American Army, and at one time an elder in the Presbyterian Church of Bound Brook.

From the camp they hastened to Philip VanHorne's to capture Gov. Livingston, or Col. Stephen Moylan

of the American Light Dragoons, who, on September 30, 1778, had married Mary Ricketts Van Horne, the eldest daughter of Mr. Van Horne. Disappointed in not finding the men they were seeking, they made prisoners of three persons whom they found at Van-Horne's, a captain, lieutenant and "another person." Being sick and convalescent, they put them all under parole.

Simcoe then hastened on to Van Veghten's Bridge. Here he found eighteen new flat boats full of water, which after forty minutes of labor he managed to destroy.

The first Dutch Reformed Church in Somerset county was located a short distance east of Van-Veghten's Bridge, the site being still marked by several tombstones of the old burying ground. Simcoe went to this church building with the hope of finding some American stores. The building was set on fire and totally destroyed on the pretext that it had been converted into a forage depot, and also that a rifle shot was fired at his soldiers from the opposite side of the river. There was no foundation of truth in these reasons, and the burning of this church was simply an outrage unjustified by the circumstances of the case, or by the rules of civilized warfare.

The Rangers now proceeded to the Somerset court house at Millstone. Here permission was given the soldiers to burn the public buildings. The blaze and smoke of the burning buildings alarmed the citizens, and they began gathering from all sides, and firing upon the soldiers.

Simcoe was attacked on every side by the militia under Col. John Neilson of New Brunswick, and at De Mott's Tavern, two miles west of New Brunswick, his horse fell dead with five bullets in his body, and the commander of the Queen's Rangers, severely injured by the fall of his horse, was a prisoner in the hands of the Americans. A soldier of the militia was about to stab him with a bayonet, but his life was saved by James Schureman, of New Brunswick.

Jonathan Ford Morris, a young medical student who was a lieutenant of the militia, bled the British officer and gave him such remedies as could be obtained. He was carried to New Brunswick, and afterward exchanged for an American officer. After the war Dr. Morris became a popular and successful physician and surgeon, locating at Bound Brook. He was a trustee of the Presbyterian Church of that town. He died in 1810 and is buried in the old Presbyterian burying ground on the west side of the church.

Simcoe afterward became Governor-General of Canada, and wrote to Dr. Morris to come to Canada that he might give him some substantial proof of his gratitude. Dr. Morris never accepted the invitation.

After the capture of their leader the Rangers made good their escape and reached South Amboy at night, where they crossed to Staten Island.

#### BOUND BROOK IN THE REVOLUTION.

At the time of the Battle of Bound Brook, the village had already risen to some prominence in the county and state. There were, as early as 1777, thirty houses in the present borough limits, in which dwelt a noble band of patriots, whose influence and labors in establishing this American Republic and making Liberty a reality were felt far beyond the boundaries of their own homes, county or state.

In "The First Houses of Bound Brook." may be found a list and some historic facts connected with these homes of the patriots. Who these patriots were and their part in the Revolution, will be briefly given as far as these facts can be substantiated.

In the Codrington house, the first built in Bound Brook and in what is now Somerset county, occupying the site of the present residence of the Hon. George La Monte, lived David Lazaidier, the grandson of Aaron, who bought this homestead in 1700. David Lazaidier took no prominent part in the Revolution.

Dr. John Griffith, living at Middlebrook, in the old house on the south side of the street opposite the

residence of Mr. B. W. Dunning, was a prominent physician, and probably the only one living in the village. He was the father of Judge William Griffith, who "in judicial merit stood first in the State of New Jersey."

Benjamin Bonney was the village blacksmith, living in the house built by his father Joseph in 1720. Benjamin Bonney was a true patriot, and this was the cause of his cruel death by the tory Bill Stewart, an account of which has already been given.

Elias Van Court was living probably in the Cammann house. His ardent love for his country caused him much suffering from the hands of British marauders.

Jacob DeGroot, the grandson of one of the earliest settlers in Bound Brook, lived near where now is St. Joseph's Parochial School. He was a captain of the New Jersey militia and was intensely hated by the British. More than once his house was visited by the enemy for the purpose of capturing or killing him. While always being able to escape from them, he was not so fortunate in regard to his property, a large amount of which they destroyed. (See appendix A.)

Peter Harpending was the proprietor of the "Frelinghuysen House," now owned by Dr. Matthews and occupied by Mr. E. L. Smith. He was a trusted and unwavering friend of American Liberty.

Tobias Van Norden was one of Bound Brook's great men during the war. He was the village store keeper, baker and justice of the peace. His store and residence was on the site of the First National Bank. No man was more aggressive and determined in resistance to the authority of Great Britain, than Tobias Van Norden.

The name of Blackford is an honored one in Bound Brook's early history. Daniel, Benjamin and Joseph, the three sons of Anthony, lived here during the Revolution, the former two being soldiers, the latter the father of Hon. Isaac N. Blackford, who was Judge of the United States Court of Claims. Daniel Black-

ford had a tannery near the present buildings known as the "Thompson Row." His leather store was on the south side of Main street, opposite the Presbyterian Church.

Back of the Presbyterian burying ground lived Col. John Staats, an officer probably of the minute men. He was a terror to the foraging parties of the British, and on many of their raids while returning with their valuable store of plunder, they were fiercely attacked by this brave soldier with his small band of followers, and were glad to escape with only the loss of their booty, prisoners and weapons. His brother, Peter Staats, kept the Washington Hotel, and was fearless in his defence of Freedom.

Many prominent names are mentioned in the history of Bound Brook during the Revolution which I cannot locate. Among these are Hendrick Staats, Nehemiah Vernon, John Harriot, Edward Annely the village gunsmith, Benjamin Harris and others, all of whom give their residence as Bound Brook.

As far as the meager facts of history and tradition go, there is no reason for any citizen of Bound Brook to be ashamed of their ancestry here during Revolutionary days. With scarcely an exception they were a band of loyal, brave, self-sacrificing patriots, who pledging "their lives, their fortune and their sacred honor" to their country, never faltered, never gave up the struggle until the invader had been driven from the land.

Of such a record we should indeed be proud, and with the example of these heroes brought so often and so prominently before us we should be inspired to love and serve our country better, and to make it the Land of Freedom, Prosperity and Peace.





**Gen. Lincoln's Headquarters at Bound Brook,  
AT PRESENT KNOWN AS "THE BATTERY."**

## APPENDIX.

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In the State Library at Trenton are four interesting volumes of Revolutionary history. They are bound folio manuscript volumes and contain the inventories of persons living in New Jersey whose property was plundered or destroyed by the British or Continentals between 1776 and 1782, mostly in '76 and '77.

Each inventory contains the valuation of every article and is certified to by the oath or affirmation of the person damaged or his representative, and in many cases the testimony of eye witnesses of the damage is also added. These oaths or affirmations were before appraisers appointed for that purpose by the State. These inventories were made as the result of an act which passed the Legislature December 20, 1781, relative to such damages and which it was expected the State would repay. In New Jersey such losses were never paid as in some other States, and the only result of these inventories has been to preserve a record of the injuries sustained by our ancestors, and to give us a reliable history of their sufferings, their furniture, dress, etc.

This act provided for two inventories, one for property destroyed by the "enemy and their adherents," and the other by the "Continental Army or by the militia of this or of the neighboring States." The articles were to be inventoried at the prices current at the opening of the war in 1775, to be certified by oath or affirmation. Nothing was to be in the inventory for which any payment had been made or any satisfaction received. No inventory was to be received from any persons who had not shown their loyalty to the American government. Any forged or feigned inventories would render the persons giving them liable to severe penalties. The appraisers were to receive as their compensation "seven shillings and six pence by the day" and "nine pence per sheet" of 90 words for registering the inventories and vouchers.

### Appendix A.

Damages by the British Army April 13, 1777, to the people of Bound Brook :

Jacob De Groot sustained a heavy loss by the British army on this same day. In his inventory he mentions : 1 bay horse, 3 years old ; 1 brown horse, 5 years old ; 1 roan horse, 7 years old ; 8 Milch cows, 1 working ox, 8 four year old cattle, 4 three year old cattle, 3 one year old cattle, 4 Calves, 1 negro man 24 years old, and many articles of clothing, dishes, etc., to a value of 234 pounds and 15 shillings.

From Hendrick Staats they took 3 hogsheds and 2 barrels of cider, 6 bushels of wheat, 4 cows, 1 calf, 2 two year old creatures and other goods in value 83 pounds, 18 shillings and 6 pence.

Tobias Van Norden in his affidavit says on the approach of the

British to Bound Brook, April 13, 1777, he was obliged to retreat and leave his house, and on his return he found the articles mentioned above missing. These articles included a Riding Chair and harness, 2 cows, a calf and heifer, 4 blankets, 8 dollars worth of pig tail in small rolls, 8 silver tea spoons, 3 pair sheets, 2 double gross of buttons, window curtains, dishes, clothing etc. to the value of 63 pounds, 13 shillings, 9 pence.

The inventory of Abraham Staats is given in full with affidavit, and is an exact copy of the original.

Inventorie of goods and Chattels taken and Destroyed of Abraham Staats by the british and their adherents in April 13, 1777.

	£.	s.	d.
To 1 Milch Cow and 5 yearlen Calves, . . . . .	11	5	
2 Great Coats half worn, . . . . .	1	15	
1 Long broad Cloath Cloak half worn, . . . . .	1	10	
5 Bushels Wheat, . . . . .	1	10	
1 pair leather breeches half worn, . . . . .		15	
1 pair leather breeches New, . . . . .	1	10	
1 Short broad Cloth Cloak partly new, . . . . .	1		
1 Shirt and One Shift New, . . . . .	1	4	
1 Callimanco Quilt, . . . . .	17	6	
1 Stripped Short gown lined, . . . . .	5		
1 Shirt half worn, . . . . .	6		
1 Pewter Tea pott and 1 Coffee pott, . . . . .	7	6	

£. 23 s. 5.

Abraham Staats sworn according to law Deposeth and Saith that on the Approach of the Enemy and their Adherents the 13th of April 1777 he fled, left his house and on his Return home again the Said day he found Missing the Several goods and Chattels Contained in the Above Inventories and that he Verily believes they were taken by the Enemy and their Adherents, and that he hath Not Received any Satisfaction for the Same or Any part thereof—further this Deponent Saith Not.

ABRAHAM STAATS.

23d October 1782.

Sworn before Tobias Van Norden.

From Benjamin Harris the British stole 1 roan horse, 1 bay horse, 1 new wagon with harness for 2 horses, 1 cow,  $\frac{3}{4}$  of a hog-head of rum, 40 calves skins tanned and curried, 11 sides upper leather, 2 horse hides, 1 hog skin, 1 pair new saddle bags, besides many other articles of clothing and beiling. The total amount of his loss was 125 pounds, 1 shilling and 6 pence.

Many others living in the village and near by suffered from the depredations of the British Army. Among them were Elizabeth Van Deventer who lost several head of cattle; James McCray whom they robbed to the value of 25 pounds. Jacob Bond from whom they took cows and clothing of nearly 50 pounds value. Margaret Workman and Archibald Van Norden also lost many smaller articles. On their return to New Brunswick the British



marched on both sides of the Raritan River, plundering and robbing many homes on the way. James Connatt lost 4 cows; Richard Field a yoke of oxen, 2 horses, 3 hogs, 11 head of cattle; Michael Field 2 cows, wagon, harness, and much bedding and dishes; Rev. Israel Reed, pastor of the Presbyterian Church of Bound Brook, lost many of his valuable books; from Hendrick Fisher they took 22 head of cattle, 3 hogs and a large sum of money.

#### Appendix B.

While the British were encamped at New Brunswick in the winter of '76-'77 they made extensive raids through the country. The Bound Brook people met with severe losses during these raids, especially from the Hessians. The inventories mention no less than five of these raids in December, 1776.

On the night of December 6 forty Hessians came to the house of Elias Van Court and took full possession. When they left early the next morning they took with them many articles of furniture and clothing, a stove, provisions and a pound of snuff. The same night probably, a large number of Hessian troops occupied the house of Nehemiah Vernon and filled his stables and barn with their horses, feeding them and carrying hay to horses in other parts of the town. They also carried away many household goods on their departure.

From Thomas McElrath this same month they stole a horse, saddle, bridle and some clothing; also a horse from Cornelius Van Duyn and on December 18th a horse from Isaac Van Tuyle. John Herriott's loss included 3 blankets, 4 new linen sheets, 1 cow, 1 washing tub new, 1 washing tub old, 1 new pair fire tongs, etc.

Daniel Blackford's inventory of damages in December, 1776, has 10 sides of leather tanned, 6 calf skins, 40 sides of sole leather, stack of wheat, horse, 60 pounds meat, etc.

Edward Annely was the gunsmith at Bound Brook. His loss was valued at nearly 100 pounds and consisted of swords, guns, pistols, bayonets, fixtures and all kinds of tools for making military weapons.

Ennis Graham's inventory is the largest of any in the vicinity of Bound Brook. Being a wealthy man frequent visits were made to his home with the hope of securing his money. On the 19th of December a band of British troopers led by a George H. Fisher, a Tory, came to Ennis Graham's barn, and from underneath the floor dug up a box, containing 6,150 pounds in cash, 3,000 pounds of which was "hard money," besides a large amount of silver ware and jewelry. Among the jewelry were garnet earrings, garnet necklace, brilliant earrings, gold, garnet and brilliant finger rings, gold, crystal and garnet sleeve buttons, three watches, etc.

#### Appendix C.

The Continental soldiers under Washington, while in camp on the Middlebrook and at Morristown, caused much damage at

Bound Brook notwithstanding the earnest efforts of Washington to prevent it.

Following is the full inventory of Elias Van Court :

An inventory of goods and chattels taken and destroyed of Elias Van Court by the Continental Army in 1777 :

	£.	s.	d.
About 10 Pannels post and rail fence, . . . . .			15
One saddle about half worn, . . . . .	1	5	
One white pine chest with a lock, . . . . .		7	6
One small pine Table and three chairs, . . . . .		10	
One very good plate Griddle, . . . . .		9	
The upper part of a small Desk, . . . . .		8	
One iron pot holding about one and a half pailfull,		9	
One hhd. one wine pipe and two bbls. all tite casks,		12	
My Dwelling house intirely Destroyed Except the frame standing and ruff thereon and kitchen of ten feet frunt and twenty five feet in rear all In- tirely gone, . . . . .			80

The above Elias Van Court Sworn According to law Deposeth and saith that he hath lost the sundries articles contained in the above Inventories and Verily Doth believe that the Continental troops hath taken Or Destroyed the same and that his house and Premises hath sustained the Damages as Above set forth and doth Verily believe the Same were done by the 8d Continental Troops and that he hath Not received any satisfaction for the Same.

ELIAS VAN COURT.

Sworn before Tobias Van Norden 21 Sept. 1782.

Edward Annely being Sworn According to law Deposeth and Saith that he Saw the troops belonging to the Continental Army take down the Chimney Out of the said Elias Van Courts house and put the Bricks in their wagons in June 1777 and carried them over the mountains in Camp, further this Deponent Saith not.

EDWARD ANNELY.

Sworn by Nathaniel Ayers Sept. 21, 1782.

In the inventory of Margaret Workman after giving the articles and values, Edward Annely testifies to seeing the Continental soldiers pull down bricks out of her house, and put them in the wagon which he believes went over the mountain to the camp to build ovens with.

Tobias Van Norden also had the chimney of his house pulled down by the soldiers and taken away and losing beside many articles of clothing, chairs, tables, dishes, boards, panes of glass, etc.

From Nehemiah Vernon they took 80 bushels of oats, 2 tons of hay, bedsteads, chairs, tables and cooking utensils.

John Harriot's house was damaged to the extent of 8 pounds and 16 shillings.

From Daniel Blackford they took 81 sides of leather, 11 tanned Calf skins, furniture, and damaged his house, the inventory claim being 84 pounds and 18 shillings.



1771



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